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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

Ed -
Good idea - Same process should be followed with other difficult countries
J

June 14, 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

From: Warren Christopher, Acting W.C.

Subject: Steps To Improve U.S.-Argentine Relations

Pursuant to your instructions, the Inter-Agency Group for the American Republics has prepared a plan of action for 1980, which I am submitting for your approval.

I. OBJECTIVES

Our principal objectives in moving to improve our relationship with Argentina are to:

-- foster Argentina's identification with the West and thus to contain Soviet political and economic influence;

-- encourage further specific improvements in human rights practices;

-- seek assistance on appropriate East-West issues (e.g. grains); and

-- obtain progress on nonproliferation objectives, particularly full-scope safeguards and ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and foster increased sensitivity among Argentine leaders to global nonproliferation concerns.

We also wish to encourage continued Argentine cooperation with the Papal mediation of Argentina's dispute with Chile over territorial limits in the Beagle Channel, a dispute that very nearly led to war between the two countries in late 1978. Finally, we wish to encourage Argentina to play a constructive role with respect to developments in Central America and other Hemispheric issues.

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II. ACTIONS FOR 1980

1. The Consultative Process

We will continue the process of political and economic consultations begun with General Goodpaster's visit to Buenos Aires in January. We contemplate:

-- a visit by the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs to Buenos Aires, possibly about August 1, during which he will review our policy concerns and the state of our relations and will be prepared to discuss steps we would plan to take to strengthen cooperation in selected areas, depending on the nature of the Argentine response.

-- a meeting of the U.S.-Argentine Mixed Economic Commission in October, the U.S. delegation possibly to be chaired by the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs. The meeting would include discussion of ongoing efforts to resolve bilateral trade issues and to expand commercial relations.

-- periodic policy talks on global and hemispheric issues, with the first round to be held during the visit of the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs.

2. Military Relations

We will begin to rebuild relations through increased contact and consultations, while stressing that further progress on human rights will be essential to the more fundamental improvement in these relations (including consideration of modification of the Humphrey/Kennedy Amendment, as reported in the conclusions of the PRC meeting). We plan to:

--begin periodic security consultations with Argentina; the first round, to be held this year in Buenos Aires, would focus on Soviet activities in the South Atlantic;

--invite an Argentine Armed Forces team to make a return visit to Washington later in the year to discuss global defense issues;

--invite Argentina to send a guest instructor to the U.S. Army School of the Americas after consulting

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with members of Congress to ensure that this initiative would not be regarded as conflicting with the spirit of the Humphrey-Kennedy Amendment.

Other issues are:

--High-Level Military Visit.

We will keep under review the desirability of proceeding with an invitation to a senior Argentine military leader (such as the Commander-in-Chief of the Argentine Army or the Army Chief-of-Staff) to visit Washington this year. A final decision on this (including the question of timing) should take into account the implications of such a move on the selection of the next Argentine president now under way within the Argentine Armed Forces, as well as continued improvements in the observance of human rights and developments in U.S.-Argentine relations.

--Sale of P-3 Aircraft.

In DOD's view, there is a strategic need for the sale of ocean surveillance aircraft to the GOA. We see no possibility, however, of seeking special legislation which would modify the Humphrey-Kennedy Amendment to permit the sale of these aircraft to Argentina this year.

3. Human Rights

We will continue the dialogue on human rights with Argentine leaders, principally but not exclusively through Ambassador Castro and during the visit by the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, Ambassador Bowdler. In these consultations we will attempt to obtain assurances that:

-- the GOA will accept an OASGA resolution which recognizes the role of the OAS Commission on Human Rights and which encompasses a call for further improvements by Argentina;

-- there will be no new disappearances, including no disappearances of persons alleged to be terrorists;

-- all persons suspected of terrorism or subversive activities, including unacknowledged detainees, will

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be processed through normal judicial channels and ensured due process;

-- guarantees will be instituted to prevent the torture of detainees; and

-- there be substantial progress, in advance of the OASGA, in reducing the number of political prisoners held without charges through release, trial, or exile (during his recent visit, Ambassador Smith was assured that half of these prisoners--1,300 at the time--would be released or sentenced by the end of the year).

The Inter-Agency Group noted that an accounting of the fate of disappeared persons was being addressed in UN fora and concluded that, while this should not be a central requirement for the improvement of our bilateral relations, it should remain an important U.S. objective. We should urge Argentina, in bilateral discussions, to cooperate with these multilateral efforts, particularly with the UN Human Rights Commission's new expert working group on disappeared persons and with other groups such as the Catholic Church.

In addition to human rights discussions initiated by the Ambassador and by Assistant Secretary Bowdler, the U.S. side of the Mixed Economic Commission will be prepared to raise or respond to human rights concerns in discussions with their Argentine counterparts, and will be fully briefed for this purpose.

4. Nuclear Relations

We want to move Argentina over time to accept IAEA safeguards on future as well as current facilities (including the reprocessing facility) and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. To do this, we need to keep open the door for continued cooperation with Argentina's nuclear program to the extent commensurate with your policy. We should:

-- try to resolve promptly, in accordance with U.S. law and our nonproliferation objectives, the remaining safeguards issues to permit delivery of highly and moderately enriched fuel for Argentina's research program, as well as components for its power program;

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-- once this is done, undertake a review of the conditions under which we could facilitate expanded participation by U.S. industry in Argentina's nuclear program. (A major case currently at issue is an export license application for the sale of a pressure vessel for the Atucha II power reactor.)

5. Other Cooperative Steps

In addition, we would:

--Sign the pending U.S.-Argentine Agricultural Cooperation Agreement during the visit of the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs;

--Seek to conclude the negotiations for the bilateral income tax treaty;

--Seek to negotiate a consular convention.

6. Consultations with Other Allies

The Inter-Agency Group also considered whether and in what form the Administration should consult our NATO allies and Japan about issues of common concern such as human rights and recent Soviet initiatives toward Argentina and other countries in the Hemisphere. These subjects and our policies thereon could be discussed within NATO fora such as the Political Advisors Committee, the Permanent council, and the NATO experts group on Latin America. Depending on the results of these consultations, we could consider further actions in Buenos Aires. A majority of the Interagency Group recommended against new high-level bilateral approaches to our Allies on these issues. We would continue the practice of consulting on human rights in the appropriate UN fora, such as the UN Human Rights Commission.

7. Implications for U.S. Policy Toward Brazil and Chile

The Group also considered the implications for neighboring countries, especially as regards security consultations.

With respect to Brazil, the Group noted that many of these steps will restore a better balance

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in U.S. relations with the two countries, since the U.S. already has a comprehensive consultative process with Brazil (including, most recently, security consultations).

Chile is concerned about our improving relationship with Argentina, which it sees as threatening in the context of the Beagle Channel dispute. We have attempted to persuade the Chileans that what we are doing with Argentina has nothing to do with Chile or with our position on the Beagle Channel, which is to encourage acceptance of the outcome of Papal mediation and avoidance of war. This issue will be more fully addressed in the review of our relations with Chile later this year.

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Concurrences:

H - Mr. J. Brian Atwood
EB - Mr Deane Hinton
HA - Ms. Patt Derian
OES - Mr. Louis Nosenzo
PM - Mr. Daniel O'Donohue
EUR/SOV - Mr. Robert Perito
EUR/RMP - Mr. Stephen Ledogar
S/P - Mr. Anthony Lake
IO - Mr. Michael Newlin
S/AS - Mr. Allen Locke
USOAS - Mr. Herbert Thompson
AID/RDP - Mr. David Raymond
NSC - Mr. Thomas Thornton
OPIC - Ms. Caryl Bernstein
STR - Mr. Robert Hormatz
DOD/ISA - Col. Patrick Briggs
JCS - Admiral J.A. Lyons
CIA - [redacted] 3.5(c)
Commerce - Mr. A. Katz
Treasury - Mr. Fred Bergsten
USDA - Mr. Dale Hathaway
DOE - Mr. Les Goldman
EXIMBANK - Mr. Crafton
ACDA - Mr. Charles Van Doren
ICA - Mr. Victor Olason
L/PM - Mr. T. Borek

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